

OUR MUSIC/OUR WORLD:  
WIND BANDS AND LOCAL SOCIAL LIFE

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# **A ‘Bridge Over Troubled Waters’: the relational space of wind bands. The case of São Jorge Azores island**

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The study I am developing is centred on the island of S. Jorge, in Azores archipelago, where the wind bands have a history of more than 150 years, and where we observed an expressive number of bands relative to the number of inhabitants (approximately one band per 600 inhabitants). I argue that the counterpoint of the “invariant” transnational world of the wind bands, with the specific meaning these acquired locally in public life, leverage the musician’s paths and enabled them to confront the migratory exodus, mobility and their insular condition itself.

The research reveals that since the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the wind band *repertoire* (be it the musical pieces, instruments practice or the performance knowledge and values) functioned as bridges which enabled *tocadores* to go ahead (despite their social condition or geography), namely undertaking successful journeys to the heart of diverse territories.

Within the framework of continental geopolitics<sup>1</sup> (Portugal and the European Commission) S. Jorge island is considered a peripheral space. Nevertheless, if we think of S. Jorge from the point of view of the wind band cartography on the Atlantic Ocean, what stands out is a central space of crossing routes, namely, between the two continents (America and Europe). As Katherine Brucher has shown in previous studies, by reference to Portuguese bands in the US, these bands have created “bridges” between the migrant community in the US and the Portuguese resident community (Brucher 2013). I enlarge this subject from the study carried out on the island

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of S. Jorge, analysing the relational space created by wind band musicians between the different islands of the Azores archipelago, between Azores and the mainland, and Azores and the US and Canada, in relation with the compulsory migration across different types of borders. In what extent the tensions of those borders are softened inside the geography of the world of wind bands? This is the main issue that I approach with this research.

Departing from the case of São Jorge island, I aim to discuss the world of wind bands at the crossroads of transnational invariants, local dynamics, and the individual paths of the musicians.

I work with two main concepts: “wind bands worlds”, and “repertoire”. “Brass bands world” and “**wind bands world**” are cognitive notions respectively developed by Ruth Finnegan (1989) and Dubois, Méon and Pierru. Both of them depart from the previous *Art Worlds* book, where Howard Becker reveals that the arts are cooperative “worlds”, made by the interactions among different actors (Becker [1982] 2008). “Wind band worlds” refers to “the specific cultural universe that these bands make up” (Dubois, Méon and Pierru 2009, 4). I will use the term “Wind band worlds” as a relational space, an “in-between-language”, that open gaps inside the established coordinates of political and economic territories. What are the challenges of thinking wind band and migration as a space of proximity, reciprocity and relationality? Criticism of thinking which is bound to the territorialities of nation states or the capitalist exchanges of the global circulation (Spivak 2003) opens doors to new areas of study, and a re-telling of the history of “the world” from the perspective of the sea, perceiving continents as islands within a mobile space (Blum 2015, 25). This view is directed towards thinking of the dislocation of people and cultures, to their reallocation or new groupings, from a trans-territorial perspective, and “seeks to reorient our critical perspective, finding capacious possibilities for new relational forms – dispersion, erosion, flotation, confluence, solvency” (Blum 2015, 25). This approach passes for a critical positioning relative to the notions of (1) relational space from the point of view of the binary centre/periphery pairing and (2) culture rooted in the polarization between origin or source vs. imitation or replica (Blum 2015). Westphal expands this discussion questioning the notion of the West, contrasting it with the fluidity and indetermination not only of decentralising spaces, but also of border dislocation discourses (Westphal 2016). He deconstructs the standardising and flattening action that underlies globalisation: views the planet as an archipelago, made up of multicentric, interstitial, mixed and mutable cultural spaces, and explores such notions as ‘proximity’, ‘relationship’ and ‘between-languages’. In opposition to the ‘worlds of being’ made of crystallised identities, he proposes ‘worlds of becoming’, worlds in permanent transformation, redirectionable according to what he considers a “multifocusing”, recognising

the role of art as a “vector of transgression par excellence” (*Ibid.*, 259). Elias & Moraru also speak about the challenges of relationality (of worldly reciprocity, coming together, relatedness, dialogue and interactivity) that break with the established coordinates of political and economic territories (Elias & Moraru 2015).

Inspired by the book of Diana Taylor entitled *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Taylor 2003), I use the term repertoire in a broader sense than the strict sense of “musical pieces”. I include the musical instruments practice, or better saying, the specific knowledge and experience of playing wind band instruments; the creativity to adapt or compose music; the ability to perform and “speak” be it on stage or marching in the streets; or the values lived inside the wind band institution. I will operate with this term in order to understand the role of wind band repertoire in the construction of bridges<sup>2</sup> (a metaphor for in-between relationships, in-between language) inside the world of wind bands: bridges between musical roles (player, conductor, arranger, composer), different hierarchies (military/philharmonic; employee/employer), between different mother languages, and the disparate territories of migration.

I argue that the counterpoint of the “invariant” transnational world of the wind bands, with the transformative local wind band practices (the “variant”), leverage the musician’s paths and enabled them to confront the migratory exodus between the islands of the Archipelago and between continents.

This case study is centred on the island of S. Jorge, in Azores, where the wind bands have a history of more than 150 years, and where there are an expressive number of wind bands relative to the number of inhabitants (in 2018, approximately one band per 600 inhabitants). The study I carried out is based on archival research (São Jorge wind bands archives), bibliographical research (local newspapers and monographs) and in fieldwork carried out in 2018 and 2019, during which I interviewed players, conductors and directors<sup>3</sup>.

### **A contextual note: The “trouble waters” of migration**

Migration refers to a physical displacement from the culture which is familiar (Baily & Collyer 2006). New approaches understand migration as an experience (Simmel 1993) lived by people who inhabit territories divided by spatialized identities (Nouss 2017). That ambivalent experience reverberates on individual biographies and on social memory through collective perfor-

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<sup>2</sup> The title of this paper was borrowed from the song of Simon and Garfunkel.

<sup>3</sup> The sound and image of the interviews were recorded, and all the research participants authorized me to use images on the project website and in documentaries, as well as the identification of their personal names.

mances that aims to recreate home (Marshall 2018). Music and migration have been an important issue revealing the ways music helps migrants to maintain cultural identity, be it for themselves or to “the eyes (and ears) of others” (Baily & Collyer 2006, 175), and the processes of transformation or recycling of musical traditions, or highlighting processes of social integration and social exclusion (Reyes 2010). Previous research on migrant communities reveals that Portuguese travel with musical instruments and repertoires, which they reiterated play in the host country, be it to remember the place of origin and negotiate cultural identities (Côrte-Real 2010; Pestana 2017), to create a transnational network of lusophone migrants (Holton 2005; Alge 2013), to weave a transnational social movement throughout the “developments of the Azorean identity” (Leal 2007). Research is also focused on the music played by Portuguese wind bands across the world: Brucher studied processes of identity building in the migrant community in the US (Brucher 2013); Oliveira, the memories of the Portuguese wind bands in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Oliveira 2016); and Helena Milheiro, in an article published in this book, approaches Portuguese identity representations in Paris, inside the Portuguese wind band. The geography of Portuguese migration, as well as that of the Azorean diaspora on the American continent, and the musical behaviours which the Portuguese “took” into those contexts, were studied by Chapin (1989), Pritchard (2006) and Leal (2007).

In Azores islands, since the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, successive migratory fluxes in a dominant direction have been documented: departure from the islands, be it to Brazil, United States, Canada, and the mainland (Avellar 1902; Santos e Matos 2013). In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, migration to Brazil was stimulated and authorized by the local administration and even by the Portuguese Crown. In 1902, José Cândido Avellar described some of those initiatives and highlighted the impact they had on the island of São Jorge: “It further appears in the municipal registry of Velas that, in 1754, the local administrative and judicial official Joaquim Alves Moniz ordered the orphan’s judge, Jorge da Cunha e Silveira, to prepare 150 people destined for Brazil, and that, for that purpose, of the couples listed, he should send some *vagrants detrimental to the public peace*” (Avellar 1902, 93). According to the author, in 1846 alone, 155 families from São Jorge accepted the offer of transport to Brazil offered by the King, D. João V.

Emigrated and resident Azoreans created and consolidated communication networks. In turn, the money earned in exile was largely invested on Azorean territory. The impact on the economy and on São Jorge society was also described by Avellar in 1902:

The important parish of Rosaes which, in that year, [1860] besides the parochial had only two whitewashed houses, today has many newly-built buildings, white as snow, in which California gold is resplendent.

This fact is repeated, more or less, in all the parishes of the island [...] It [emigration] elevated the venal value of property; expurgated assets mortgaged to debts contracted during calamitous times with rampant usury; restored jurisdictions, freed up property from responsibilities; acquired grand properties from landlords from outside the island; remitted hundreds of recruits from obligatory military service; properly remunerated the worker [...] Gaspar Silva, from the parish of Ribeira Seca, returning from Hawaii where he acquired his fortune, spent his money largely on acts of noted philanthropy, charity and kindness (*Ibid.*, 96 and 97)<sup>4</sup>.

In S. Jorge, the impact of emigration can be felt above all, in the rural parishes and in the young population. As an example, we can see that, throughout the 1960s, on S. Jorge island, Fajã dos Vimes saw its population reduced from 522 to 117, while Entre Ribeiras went from 120 to 3 inhabitants (*Ibid.*, 247).

With the official recognition of the Autonomous Region of the Azores islands in 1976, new policies for the fixation of the Azorean population began to be designed, becoming more effective after 1986, with Portugal joining the European Community. However, these measures did not put a stop to the migratory routes traced in the Atlantic throughout the previous centuries. Portuguese migrants organized themselves in the host countries, around autonomous institutions – like the so called “Portuguese wind bands” (see Seixas de Oliveira 2019)–, but also created exclusive communication networks with the Azoreans residing in the archipelago, like the wind band societies. These networks have facilitated the exodus of family members and neighbours bound for the “Americas” and the social and cultural development social of the territory of origin.

### **Part I –The process of institutionalization a new social reality in São Jorge**

We will recall the philharmonic wind bands. Each party had its own. They were made up of artists, enthusiasts and intransigents; but their dedication to the party – at times heroic, it’s true – did not obey any principles, nor ideas, nor personal loyalties; the simple fact that they played in this or that philharmonic band almost made them drunk with zeal or intransigence. They switched from philharmonic to philharmonic with incredible ease; and the affection they had for the music from party A quickly changed in favour of party B’s music.

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<sup>4</sup> All citations originally not in English were translated by the author.

They would move with their suitcases and baggage. With them went the *musical rivalry* and the rancour of antagonism: on moving day itself, the *virado* (lit. turned) musician was the most dangerous and terrible at the philharmonic meetups, attempting to punch the other party's musicians in the face with his respective instrument

On the day that some musician *virasse* (turned), both philharmonics would go out: one to annoy the other about the conquest of another figure from their ranks, the other to show their enemies that the defector was simply a *verbo de encher* (filler) and that you *can* make an omelette without breaking eggs.

Here and there, in the dead of night, one philharmonic or another would roam the town streets, playing the Hymn of the Charter or the respective party's anthem. Everyone knew the anthem of the party they belonged to, and *their band's* music: the party members would leave home, follow the philharmonic until the finished, and then returned home, satisfied and victorious...

Long live our party! From the other party, not even the sound of a mouse. They would get a *bacalhau*...as consolation (*dar um bacalhau* – to give a codfish – is an expression meaning to get a handshake or an acknowledgement).

Never did the passion for a party, in this country of devilish politics, take on, anywhere, such marked proportions! Not that the people came to blows over the elections: everything was resolved verbally, with only light bruises to everyone's dignity...And that was it. [...] The elections here were disputed between regenerators and progressives (Sousa 1897, 76-7).

Duarte Sousa's report reveals the role of the cosmopolitan elites in the institutionalization of the *philharmonics* (local designation of wind bands) and their emerging social and political space on the island of S. Jorge, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Musical instruments, scores and even street performance were imported from the mainland the elites, in order to involving "the popular" – the "crowd" as referred by Trevor Herbert in this book –, in their political and individual affirmation projects.

Duarte Sousa accentuates the "musical rivalry", a structuring trait of the philharmonics in the following decades. During those years, rivalry was prompted by the division between the two political parties which most disputed the governing of Portugal until the implementation of the Republic. As it was already happening on the mainland, in São Jorge the philharmonic bands gave life to the national party division, dragging crowds after the sound of the hymns and marches of the parties with which they were associated, a rivalry that will persist as a defining feature of civilian band experience for

decades to come.<sup>5</sup> In the same monograph, the author informs us of the social profile of the musicians. Duarte Sousa refers to the existence, in the county of Velas, of two philharmonics: Liberdade (Liberty) (whose musicians were “artists” [craftsmen] and whose instrumental was the property of the Teixeira Soares family heirs) and União (Union), with musicians from different professional classes, with an instrumental belonging to the “ancient philharmonic created in 1869”, and which the author claims used to be the property of José Pereira da Cunha da Silveira e Sousa.<sup>6</sup> According to him, the repertoires of both reverberated within the public street space was constituted of patriotic (national anthem), party and sacred anthems, its activity being concentrated to party events and religious processions. (*Ibid.*, 133). Crowds were attracted by the sound of the bands, as stated by Duarte Sousa.

Intersecting the political, religious and artistic fields, and at the hand of the cosmopolitan elites, these institutions turned the philharmonic performance into a laboratory of social transformation, effectively contributing to “changing the world”, in the sense of Berger e Luckmann (1999). The great patron of the philharmonics on S. Jorge, José Pereira da Cunha da Silveira e Sousa, possessed a broad knowledge of other cultures. It was this knowledge that allowed him to introduce to S. Jorge modern social habits, which defined the “western” culture of the 1800s. The institutionalization of wind bands associations was one of them.

The wind band performance contributed to the institutionalization of new habits on S. Jorge society, such as the cooperation among different people (the hidden women who sewed the uniforms, the anonymous arrangers who adapted the scores to the instrumental constitution of the bands, the skilled craftsmen who ensured the maintenance of the instruments, etc.), or the private collective preparation during rehearsals which result in a sonorous presentation in the public space. During those years, the philharmonic bands were primarily masculine and young, and their artistic directors did not need to have music as their main professional activity. In fact, as father Manuel de Azevedo da Cunha reveals, regarding the philharmonics founded on S. Jorge

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<sup>5</sup> For rivalry between bands in other countries, see Suzel Reily (2013).

<sup>6</sup> Bachelor of Philosophy from the University of Coimbra, José Pereira da Cunha da Silveira e Sousa (1823-1912) was council president of the Calheta and Velas municipalities, and founder and proprietor of the Velense club and the Velense Theatre. According to Manuel Cunha, he was the “richest proprietor of S. Jorge”, and the “generous patron of several philharmonics” to which he would offer the instrumental (Avellar 1902, 394-5). The instruments and the repertoire were acquired on the continent by the elites and brought to the bands of São Jorge. In the following decades, both the repertoire and even the instruments began to circulate in other local bands, thus facilitating its foundation.

in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>, the conductors had different professional activities: military (Joaquim Alberto Lança), priest (Manuel Álvaro de Bettencourt), a bureau chief (Jácome de Sousa Ribeiro), a clerk who had also been a primary school teacher (Manuel Maria da Silveira Bettencourt), a postal employee (João Forjaz Pacheco) and Adolfo dos Reis Portugal, whose profession I couldn't confirm. Together, these conductors circulated throughout the different islands of the Azores. This mobility widened their frame of reference and would have been crucial for the local perception of a transnational, wind band world.

Wind band associations instituted a new reality in the public sphere of S. Jorge, around musical performance: a collective of wind instrumentalists synchronized by the conductor's baton, can be heard in the public space (and temporarily appropriates it). They play a functional repertoire, constituted predominantly by hymns and marches, to which they added, over time, other musical compositions, constantly updating.

In the following century, bands will multiply, extending the opportunity to play a wind instrument to an increasing number of people.

From the statutes such of the Nova Aliança Association, founded on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April, 1900, we learn the manner in which these new collectives objectified themselves: internal organs and agents with specific management and member activity controlling functions, a differentiated and hierarchical typology of members (contributing or auxiliary and honorary philharmonics), common resources (headquarters, musical scores, instruments and others), "universal" laws/rules for all the members, from coercive measures and sanctions for punishing behaviours deviating from that collective objectification, namely absences from rehearsals or public performances, to measures of protection (mutualism) and recognition, such as, for example, receiving donations for taking care of personal difficulties, or dividends from the "toccatas" receipts. The members also had the right to use the installations and take advantage of the "recreations provided by the Association", among which were legal games and the right to "an annual toccata, for a private celebration" (Statutes of the *Nova Aliança* Association, Art. 6). The conductor and sub-conductor were elected from among the members, with the sub-conductor being responsible for teaching the music to the apprentices. Twelve years later, the association's resources consisted of a house (the headquarters), musical instruments, a music repertoire and furniture. As happened on the mainland, the Saint Jorge

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<sup>7</sup> Azevedo da Cunha maintains that on the island of S. Jorge the first philharmonic was founded in 1855, at S. Tiago da Ribeira Seca (municipality of Calheta), by José Pereira da Cunha da Silveira e Sousa, and having as its maestro Joaquim Alberto Lança, military musician. José Pereira da Cunha da Silveira e Sousa's brother was a musician in this band.

bands were gradually appropriated by other sectors of society besides the cosmopolitan elites, from owners of fishing companies, to traders and parish priests. Rui Vieira Nery points out this fact

During the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a clear acceleration of the process of 'appropriation' of civilian wind bands within the localities in which they are rooted, by lower socio-economic classes, and a consequent transformation of their patterns of musical taste in a 'lighter' sense, with two considerations. First, the tendency of the local elite to lose interest and gradually drift away from this type of association, hence eroding their original status as symbols of social distinction. Second, the emergence of a growing prejudice in taste toward the new and dominant wind band repertoire, which is further from the erudite patterns and cosmopolitan models that was paramount to the bands from the Regeneration Era (Nery s.d., 10).

For musical performances, these wind bands associations such *Nova Aliança* used their know-how and the collective with its own identity, gradually instituting a new social reality into the public space. Wind band performance promoted a morality of collective duty, the "national" or "local" good or interest, though governed by universal laws supposedly common to all humans<sup>8</sup> (in a clear rupture with the social order of the Monarchic world made up of divisions and hierarchies assumed as natural).

As in the mainland in São Jorge, the bands were gradually appropriated by other sectors of society besides the cosmopolitan elites, from owners of fishing companies, to traders and parish priests.

The social consensus of those new institutions was made possible through the alliance with local established or emerging powers: firstly, with the cosmopolitan elites, the political parties and with the catholic church, and secondly, the municipalities and the printed press.<sup>9</sup> It was also possible because the codes encapsulated in the wind band performance converged in with the values of modernity: universalism and timelessness, which was thought to be expressed in the musical pieces they performed; the nationalism which was supposedly inscribed in the idiosyncrasies "of the people"; the progress associated with literacy and the new social habits of the citizens. The plausibility of that transformation was objectified in the multiple performance texts, at the same time that it was experienced, and inter-subjectively lived, by the different participants (philharmonics and audiences), and consequently reverberated in the individual memory, weaving the social memory.

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<sup>8</sup> Although this universalism includes mainly, or only, men.

<sup>9</sup> The role of the local press in the institutionalization of musical associations in Portugal was analyzed in another study (Pestana 2015).

## **Part II – In-between islands and continents: proximity, mobility, reciprocity, and relationality**

In statutes, such as those analysed previously, it was established that the conductor was selected from within the body of musicians of the wind band, however, when financial means permitted<sup>10</sup>, broader selection procedures were followed in São Jorge wind bands, at least from the middle of the last century. The wind band world leverages the musician's paths, opened and consolidated bridges, and builds "sound ontologies" (Ochoa Gautier 2014) through the relation between the musicians, the repertoire, the wind band "instrument", and the listeners/or ritual practitioners, namely during the religious feasts.

### Individual paths

It is through the memories of wind band musicians that I was able to understand the transformation which occurred during the last 50 years. Interviews with the musicians have revealed that the high points of their wind bands were related to the hiring of an external conductor and (or) with tours off the archipelago and outside the world of wind bands. From these memories we can see that in the second half of the last century, conductors were (i) accomplished multi-instrumentalists<sup>11</sup>, (ii) achieved mobility through experience with military bands or through performance spaces unrelated to the activity of their own bands where they acquired knowledge of new musical pieces, and (iii) have a network of contacts with other conductors, publishers and their respective outlets and composers who connected the islands, the archipelago and the continents of Europe and America. Linking these factors is in-betweenness and mobility, be that in terms of the ability to play several musical instruments, be part of a different 'worlds of music' (military, civil, etc.), different musical repertoires or geographic locations.

Let see an example. It was with the Filarmónica Recreio Topense of São Jorge that Eduardo Borba,<sup>12</sup> a "conductor" in S. Jorge (Azores) and San Jose

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<sup>10</sup> In times of reduced human and financial resources, the selection was made within the band itself, as was the case with the young clarinetist José Amorim Faria de Carvalho, who at the age of 18 was invited to direct his philharmonic society. When musicians and the conductor of the Sociedade Filarmónica Euterpe de Castelo Branco migrated to the USA, following the eruption of the Capelinhos volcano in Faial in 1957, the young musician assumed the position of conductor and thus ensured the continuity of the band (interview with José Amorim Faria de Carvalho, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> In this context, it is often doubled-twice musicians who are the most respected among their peers. The practice of playing two or more instruments was a recurrent characteristic of maestros until the end of century, see Charles Keil (2013).

<sup>12</sup> Eduardo Reis de Borba (b. Topo, S. Jorge, 1948) began learning music with his older brother, a musician with the Filarmónica Recreio Topense, the band Borba also joined

(California, US, where he lived between 1972 and 1981), first played in public. At nineteen he was admitted at the Military Band of the Azores where he developed his knowledge of the specific *repertoire* of wind bands<sup>13</sup> and a network of professional musicians which enabled him to lead wind bands. Through the Military Band of the Azores, Eduardo Borba established contacts with military musicians who facilitated the acquisition of a new repertoire for the bands he directed:

One time when there was a competition in Ribeira Seca, I called Captain Amílcar Morais and told him about my band, its strength, the musicians that I had and so on. So I needed a semi-classical piece in order for the band to compete. And he sent me a very beautiful piece, an excerpt from an operetta, and really beautiful. We played it and it was a success (Borba interview, 2019).

When he emigrated to the US in 1972, he was contacted by Portuguese businessmen who offered him a job if he agreed to play in the wind band Nova Aliança. He sustains that playing the trumpet has allowed him to have better jobs in the US. On his return from the US, where he had played and led bands, Eduardo Borba was invited to conduct several bands:

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at the age of 12, first as a horn player (saxhorn, or *trompinha de Nossa Senhora*) and later as a trumpeter. During those years, he also worked as a fisherman and whaler, including fishing shrimp in Mozambique. At the age of 19, after an audition, he joined the Banda Militar dos Açores in the rank of Band Corporal. Although he wished to pursue a career as a military musician, at his mother's request he emigrated with her and a brother to California, USA, where he lived between 1972 and 1981. This multi-instrumentalist played the saxhorn trumpet and piston valve trombone. In the USA, he played in the Portuguese Band and was one of the founding musicians of the Filarmónica Nova Aliança (1972) and founding "mestre" [conductor] of the Banda Juvenil da Nova Aliança, a youth ensemble, and the Sociedade Filarmónica União Popular, also known as the Portuguese Philharmonic of San Jose. On his return to the Azores, he rejoined the Filarmónica Recreio Topense and subsequently became the "mestre" of several bands on the island of S. Jorge: Sociedade Nova Aliança de Santo Antão, Sociedade Club União, Sociedade Recreio dos Lavradores de Santo Antão, among others. Since 2015 he has been an organist at the Topo church and composed music and lyrics for the *marchas* (people's parades) of São João.

<sup>13</sup> A large part of the interviewees mentioned the importance that military conductors had in their wind bands, be it in the musical repertoire, in the collective discipline and even in uniforms. But the influence of military institutions on wind bands did not end there. From the totalitarian military institutions, the wind bands reproduced the way of structuring their individuals, enabling self-effacing experiences for the individuality of each of their musicians, welcoming them all under the protective roof of the "Association house", and providing common social experiences which reverberate in everyone memory.

They offered me 4,000 escudos a month to rehearse. I earned 8,000 at the Grémio Agrícola, an agricultural guild, (at that time, the money was very valuable). Club União also came to offer me 4,000 escudos. Four and four is eight... and so I went. Between 1983 and '84, I was in both. There was a festival in Galheta on a Sunday night, and I went with the Sociedade Filarmónica (Philharmonic Society) Nova Aliança band, with 17 musicians on stage. The musicians played very well, very in tune, and smooth. I told them 'When I conduct in a lower register, you accompany me, do not be afraid, I will not let you fall. When I raise the register, you come after me; I don't want to hear one instrument over another, I want it all in unison, okay?' ...and people loved it! The next day, directors of the Sociedade Filarmónica Recreio dos Lavradores de Santo Antão came to my house and said: 'Eduardo, we want to play under your direction' and offered 10,000 a month for me to go to Recreio dos Lavradores... and I was there 12 consecutive years (interview Borba, 2019).

During the last 50<sup>th</sup> years Azorean wind bands players used their archipelagic situation, lying between islands and continents, to capitalize upon the opportunities for exchanges and mobility. Eduardo Borba is one among many players that due to the wind band world became conductor and/or arranger or composer. The enlargement of his musical abilities contributes to a better economic situation and social prestige, not only in São Jorge island but also on the distant places where he migrated to: belonging to the world of wind bands made it easier to face his migrant condition.

### Opening and consolidating bridges

The research reveals that for nearly five decades, the wind bands have been organizing regular exchanges with bands from mainland Portugal, the US and Canada, creating a bridge between the archipelago's residents and Azorean emigrants; between island Portugal and continental Portugal:

Here in the Azores there is a strong relationship with the diaspora and therefore, almost every year, at the time of the Espírito Santo [Pentecost], there are wind bands that come from abroad with their emigrants, and children of emigrants who would never come here if it weren't for the wind band. And not so long ago, wind bands from here, on the island, went on a tour of the US, playing in the various places where almost all the members of the wind band had family, residing, working, living, studying. So, we can see that philharmonics create bonds beyond blood and that's so beautiful to see (interview Coquet 2019).

For example, in two of the three exchanges with Portuguese bands from the US, the Sociedade Filarmónica União Popular da Ribeira Seca received

large sums of money which were put towards the headquarter, and the purchase of instruments, uniforms or catering equipment (Interview with Luís Nemésio 2019).<sup>14</sup> These exchanges reaffirm the ties between family members and former neighbours, ties that have been broken by waves of emigration. Castelo Branco, a *tocador* (lit. a player), musician from the Sociedade Filarmónica União Popular da Ribeira Seca, describes how “It is a unique experience. That is to say, I think it is very important for us to have the possibility of making such trips to the émigré community, to the diaspora as it’s now called” (interview Castelo Branco 2019). The impact of this coming and going can be seen, in the creation in São Jorge island of youth bands, like those youth bands created alongside US-based Portuguese bands.

The mobility of musicians contributes to sustainability these bands:<sup>15</sup> when a band does not have enough musicians to perform a “service” for which it is booked, it will call on musicians from other bands (starting with those who have played for them in the past). Let us consider some examples: multi-instrumentalist Manuel Garcia began learning music on Pico Island at the Sociedade Filarmónica União e Progresso where he played for 40 years. In 2017 he became president of the Sociedade Nova Aliança on S. Jorge Island,

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<sup>14</sup> One of the important roles of these bands is the catering services they provide, especially during the festas do Espírito Santo (Pentecost’s festivals of the Holy Spirit).

<sup>15</sup> The maintenance costs of the philharmonic band were borne by the associations until the late 1970s. In those years, the main expenses were with the conductor, the purchase and maintenance of musical instruments, the uniforms, the displacement of musicians and instruments for the presentations and sometimes the rehearsal room rental itself. The funds came from participating in religious festivals, donating goods (such as musical instruments) or money by emigrants and (or) other local benefactors. It was from the end of the 1970s, after democracy was reinstated in Portugal, that the State expanded the allocation to municipalities, allowing them to develop their own cultural programs. From this date, the municipalities and the Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores invested regularly in the renewal of instruments and uniforms and in the training of musicians and conductors of the wind bands. In addition to these supports, the Regional Government invested in the representation of the Azorean identity from the local wind bands. I give two examples: Lira Açoriana (lit. Azorean Lira), a symphonic band made up of musicians from different wind bands in the archipelago; and the project to archive and document the Azorean band activity in course at the Francisco Lacerda Museum, on the island of São Jorge. Virgínia Neto, director of the Francisco Lacerda museum describes the main financial sources of wind bands in the 21st century: “In fact, the great support comes from the Regional Government. The City Councils also generally support by inviting wind bands to their county’s parties. Each year they choose a Philharmonic to perform a concert and that concert is paid for. But we must not forget the work of the philharmonic directors. Philharmonic bands have dinners at parties, hold ball dances and all that money goes to later to pay for an exchange with another band from another island or continent” (interview Neto 2019).

to where he had moved for employment. He continued to play with the band in Pico when they lacked a percussionist, and brought musicians of that band to S. Jorge when the Nova Aliança needed reinforcements:

Recently we had the Cultural Week here with the *marchas* (people's parades) of São João and as one of the funds of our society comes from the restaurant that was opened during that week, we have many musicians working there. We needed musicians for the parade, and I called upon six players from my old band to play at the parade. So, we just pay the ticket and they come with goodwill. That's easy. In amateur music, it's easy (interview Manuel Garcia, 2019).

A reciprocidade entre músicos e bandas estende-se do arquipélago às rotas da emigração. Vejamos um exemplo. Em 2019, foram são jorgenses emigrados nos EUA que se mobilizaram para que a wind band Sociedade Filarmónica União Rosalense pudesse participar no festival of Our Lady of the Rosary in Rosais, São Jorge. João Cunha<sup>16</sup> and Milton Reis<sup>17</sup> came from te USA to reinforce the band and mobilized the local musicians for the band's reactivation and participation in the festival. The band's reactivation for the performance during the festival of Our Lady of the Rosary in Rosais also includes those who live on other Azorean islands, like Leonel Santos.<sup>18</sup>

The Rosais band reborn for the feats of Our Lady of the Rosary thanks to the collaboration of musicians who despite inhabiting other geographies, physically moved themselves to Rosais. The band has to stay active because, as Milton Reis said, "is a pillar of our community, is a big family, you see, my father and grandfather were already part of this band. We live this intensely, it's our band, it's us" (interview Reis, 2019). During 2019 Our Lady of the Rosary Feast, João Cunha hoisted the flags of the USA, California, and the Azores on the front of his house, side by side.

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<sup>16</sup> João Cunha started to play the tuba aged 10 at the Sociedade Filarmónica União Rosalense. When, in 1976, João Cunha emigrated with his parents to California (US), he joined the Nova Aliança band, founded by his brother Jorge Sequeira. Since he was retired, each year, he spends some months in S. Jorge joining the Sociedade Filarmónica União Rosalense (interview Cunha, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> Milton Reis emigrated in 1969 to the east coast of the US, where he played in the Filarmónica de Nossa Senhora do Rosário of Providence (interview Reis, 2019).

<sup>18</sup> Leonel Santos is son of one of the founding musicians of the Sociedade Filarmónica União Rosalense (1936). Since the end of the 20th century he lives on the island of Terceira, where he plays in the Sociedade Filarmónica de Instrução e Recreio dos Artistas de Angra. Every year, he returns to Rosais, São Jorge, for the festivities of Our Lady of the Rosary and participates in the local band.

### Building “sound ontologies”

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century wind bands solidified a tie with the local public religious rituals and feasts. With few exceptions, the wind band calendar coincides with the catholic church and brotherhoods calendars. For example, the Sociedade Filarmónica Rosalense,

a wind band with about 19 elements in 2019, begins the year, in January, with the feast of Santo Antão, participate in the Lenten rituals in the processions of the *Senhor dos Passos* [Lord of the Steps] and the *Senhor Morto* [Dead Lord], in May participates in the celebrations to Our Lady of Fatima, at Pentecost intensifies the activity with the Festa do Espírito Santo [Holy Ghost Fest], in June, participates in the popular festivals of the Velas municipality, in August in the festivals of Our Lady of the Rosary. Despite this functional relationship with the Catholic church, the Philharmonic does not enter the church (the exceptions that the interviewed musicians keep in their memory are a musician's funeral and a day of heavy rain). The analysis of the repertoire of different bands throughout religious festivals reveals that it maintains the same topics (marches, hymns, concert pieces) at the same time that it is constantly renewed with new arrangements and compositions.

I will give as an example the participation of the wind band of the Sociedade Filarmónica União Popular da Ribeira Seca during the Coroação [coronation] of Maria Gonçalves in Ribeira Seca, a ritual that expresses the recognition of brother by the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit.

The Sociedade Filarmónica União Popular da Ribeira Seca<sup>19</sup> open the ritual playing “Casa da Música d’Antas” by the Portuguese mainland composer Valdemar Sequeira. The band also plays its anthem, the ‘Hino da Sociedade União Popular da Ribeira Seca’ by Leandro Silva, while the procession assembles. When the procession continues to the church, the wind band play ‘Homenagem a Gonzaga’ composed by Sérgio Cabral, a musician in the band. They also play the march “Vila da Serra d’El Rei”, a composition by Januário Ventura, before leaving their instruments in the sacristy when the

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<sup>19</sup> The wind band is proud to be the oldest of the 14 bands on the island of S. Jorge and benefits from the successive support from S. Jorge emigrants, which have funded the construction of the headquarter, purchase of instruments and uniforms, and the maintenance of instruments. One of the musicians, Sérgio Cabral, is also a composer writing regularly for the band but without payment. According to the musicians interviewed, the main problem facing the band in 2019 is the mass migration of young musicians who leave the island to continue their education or pursue a career. The band invests both in the early tuition of children (in 2019 alone, 10 new musicians left the music school to join the band) and in the organization of workshops to ensure its musicians receive regular training. The wind band da Sociedade Filarmónica União Popular da Ribeira Seca had offered its services free of charge to Maria do Rosário Gonçalves.

procession enters the church. Before the communitarian lunch, the band plays “Aeternum”, a march by Vítor Resende and then the “Hino do Espírito Santo”, a hymn by Joaquim Lima that characterizes the soundscape of the of the Holy Spirit Feasts in all Azores islands. At the end of the meal the band returns to the marquee and closes the ritual with “Aprillis 1830” and “Marcha Mário João”, by the Portuguese composers José Maciel and Manuel Xavier Soares respectively.

Despite the different pieces played throughout this ritual, the sonority of the wind band that echoes on the streets is considered “natural” of the Holy Spirit Feasts by the local inhabitants and can be heard in the different geographies of Azorean emigration.

### **The relational space of wind band: concluding**

In this study, I approach the apparent antagonism of a standardized world of music to a global scale, though differentiated both in action and thought, within the heart of the local communities.

Historically, the wind band’s in São Jorge were a top-down laboratory of social transformation, affording the laws and the control of elites that literally need to change the local way of social life, according with their political interests and cosmopolitan values. But at least since the last 50th years (the period recalled by my interviewees) the wind bands were permeable enough to accommodate, inside São Jorge society, new social roles (composers, conductors, *tocadores*) and identities (*Saint Georgian*, *Saint Georgian-american* or *Saint Georgian-Azorian*).

As in other places in 19<sup>th</sup> century Portugal, São Jorge wind bands were created by the local cosmopolitan elites or priests in order of their own interests. Although, the specific knowledge and experience of playing wind band instruments leveraged the individual paths of players.

The local appropriation of an ‘invariant’ world of wind bands and the collective experience of a moveable and in-between *repertoire* enabled the musicians and communities to confront the migratory exodus and their insular condition itself, functioning both as a conceptual map with stable coordinates and as a possible bridge that enabled them to cross borders and undertake successful journeys to the heart of several critical territories.

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